

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

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*News-Letter*

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## THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

FOUNDED IN 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit association of book-lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors in the West and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to six hundred members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular Membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues of \$12.00. Dues date from the month of the member's election.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current keepsake series, *Letters of the Gold Discovery*. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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## QUARTERLY *News - Letter*

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### BOOKSELLING IN THE MOUNTAINS

*Roy Vernon Sowers*

OME ELEVEN YEARS AGO, after a lot of looking around, I bought a small ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains and began the long process of making it habitable according to my standards. Such a purchase, in those days, was by no means indicative of sound financial standing; and still less of business acumen. About every second property in these hills was for sale, and both buyers and realtors were very few. With the recent boom in country real estate, my ranch has changed in popular estimation from a bookman's folly to something very desirable. Thousands of city-dwellers are crowding into real estate offices to buy country property—usually at fantastic prices. As a consequence, the landscape—even of these hills, is breaking into a rash of shiny new houses, surrounded by barbecue pits, painted wagon wheels, plaster ducks and all the gimcracks which Hollywood and the advertising industry have foisted on the public mind as a part of “gracious country living.”

With a consistency which is almost sublime, the American public, when it does the right thing, does for the wrong reasons. Having created the frankenstein of the atomic bomb, we now think to evade the consequences by taking Alka-Seltzer! Scientific studies would seem to indicate that in the event of atomic war, we in the country might survive, a few hours, or a few days longer than our friends in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Scarcely more. Yet thousands of business men, suddenly aware of the vulnerability of the cities, are buying country estates and equipping them with everything to make them equally vulnerable. An electric water-pump, wherever located, is not much use without electricity; and discussions of food supply are purely

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers will recall Mr. Sowers as a staff member of the Henry E. Huntington Library (1927-28); or as a bookdealer in Pasadena (1928-1933); or later as a rare book-print dealer in San Francisco (1933-1941). Currently, he is working on an unpublished alchemical manuscript of Sir Isaac Newton's that will eventually appear in a limited edition. He lives at Glenwood, California.

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academic if every drop of water is radio-active.

The most curious and least realized fact about American city civilization is that it creates an attitude of mind which, in relation to large areas of everyday phenomena, is as completely stultified as, say, the mind of a doctrinaire communist. Judging from my own rather limited correspondence, there are thousands of people throughout this country who are suddenly aware that there is a developing crack in our American way of life; and a lot of them feel that the retreat to the farm is the solution. It may be. Indeed I think it is. It is over twenty years since I began being a nuisance to my friends by talking "back to the land"; but in the light of some experience, I know that much of such talk is sheer nonsense. It would be easy to dash off an eulogy of country life—filled with the fragrance of the redwoods, the orchard in bloom and the feel of the good brown earth—but when I am asked for an article for the Book Club *Quarterly* I assume that some solid content is expected.

It has long been customary to refer to this sort of rural existence as the "simple life"—which it certainly is not, though there is some philosophic truth in the statement. When I left the city, I was a bookseller; but in the years since, I have, of necessity, learned something of carpentry, brick-laying, concrete work, plumbing, electric wiring, mechanics and all the various operations of farming—pruning, spraying, disking and fruit picking, not to mention plain digging. When we had a leaky faucet in the city, a phone call brought a plumber to fix it; here, it continues to leak until I find time to put in a new washer—first, because we have no telephone; second, because, as I discovered the first time we had a plumber out from the nearest town, it is almost cheaper to install a new sink. In the same way, if the gas engine on the spray outfit balks in the midst of a job, one has to try to repair it, rather than bring a mechanic from the city to clean a carburetor.

One of the first questions that the city-dweller-turned-farmer is likely to ask himself, is whether in the cities division of labor has not gone to ridiculous extremes; whether most of us have not become unduly dependent on others. When our lighting plant, for the first time, suddenly stopped and plunged the house into darkness, it seemed a major calamity; but the next day it appeared slightly ridiculous to pay wages and travel-time to a city mechanic to learn that the trouble was due merely to fouled spark-plugs.

Living in the country, one learns to use equipment which is simple

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enough to be understood; to give it the necessary regular attention; and, perhaps most important, not to get into a howling dither when something goes wrong.

It seems to me that one of the most absurd myths, at least as applied to the cities, is that of American self-reliance; it is as ridiculous as to call ourselves a great scientific nation because we all know how to push buttons. Take away the radio, shut off electricity, close the gas stations, the movies and the department stores, and see how "self-reliant" is the average man or woman! These amenities doubtless have some relation to civilization though they are all new, even to our own; but they are not components of civilization. In a very real and philosophical sense, our so-called "progress" has resulted in our becoming more and more dependent on gadgets and less and less on ourselves. To learn the true meaning of self-reliance and independence, I recommend life away from the cities.

Since the time of Virgil, it has always been simple, for those who have the means, to enjoy the pleasures of the country, by using slaves to do the work. There is a great deal to be said for it—if one happens not to be a slave; but I am not writing for the benefit of any modern Maecenas. For most of us, moving to the country is something like being born or getting married or having children. If one knew in advance, one might hesitate; yet in retrospect it partakes of inevitability.

There are new and unavoidable daily chores—to get in firewood, to pump water, perhaps to fill the oil lamps; and there are seasonal chores of which one gradually learns the necessity—to dig the garden before it is too hard, to spray the trees if one wants clean fruit, to burn brush during the wet season; and always, there are the special chores—the little paint job, the roof-leak, or the broken windowpane. And one of the things one discovers is that the less household or mechanical equipment one has, the less time has to be devoted to keeping it in running order. (People in the city never notice this relationship; they simply work hard, to make more money, to buy more and more labor-saving devices and to pay more and more other people to keep them repaired!) In the country, if you don't touch a finger to farming per se, the essential and unavoidable daily tasks are fairly strenuous. In the city, whatever the mental effort required in your work, your heaviest physical effort may be that of opening the car door. This way of life tends to produce wealth, but also waistlines. In the country it is easier to avoid both.

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Country living, as I see it, is, as much as anything, a state of mind or a philosophy of life; and obviously it cannot be achieved overnight by the purchase of five acres of land. One of the commonest misconceptions is that a man can spend most of life in the city in the mad scramble for wealth, and then "retire" to happiness on the land. The results are precisely what we see on every hand at present—country homes and "estates," occupied by people who live and think exactly as they did in the city. The time to retire to the country is *before* one has acquired financial independence and before one's mind has become solidified in the customary city modes of thought. In the first place, it is only by experience that one learns how few of the costly appurtenances of modern life have any relation to contentment; in the second, it takes time to discover the simple pleasures such as walking, reading or gardening. For twenty years, I have listened to people telling me just how much they are going to enjoy books as soon as they have made enough money to retire. Lots of them have retired meantime, but they don't buy books, nor do they read them—except possibly an occasional Book-of-the-Month.

When, shortly after Pearl Harbor, I moved my stock of Rare Books and Prints to this remote fastness, I was not thinking of it as a business move. It seemed that the production of food might be important, and for two or three years I turned farmer—with what physical torment only those who have tried it will appreciate. But with the gradual return of "normal" conditions, it became apparent that the much-vaunted American system of distribution was so efficient as to leave nothing for the producer of fruit. As an experiment, I issued a catalogue of books, and the results have encouraged others. At present, my business is conducted wholly by mail. (Telegrams take longer, but eventually reach me—by mail!) My annual turnover is a fraction of what it was in San Francisco, but my overhead costs are negligible, I am not tied to regular hours in a shop, and I have time to catalogue with a thoroughness which was not possible in a city shop. Perhaps best of all, I am under no pressure to "merchandise" whatever type of material may be momentarily popular. Since January, for example, I have been working on a catalogue of early Medicine and Science. This list will have no popular appeal and present indications are that printing costs will compel me to charge a dollar for it; but I expect that sales will be adequate to pay me something for my time; and the study of Medical History is proving a very stimulating experience.

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At intervals, over a two-year period, I have been working on an adobe building to house my Books and Prints; and within another six months I hope to have the shelving completed and the collection installed. Because I have used chiefly the local materials ready to hand, this structure lacks some of the refinements of usual construction; but for the same reason, the costs—aside from my labor—have been very low. As a bookseller, and a strictly specialized one, I would be very prosperous indeed before I could commission such a building through the building trades. And it seems to me that there is an inference to be drawn from this experience. Free men have always used their hands to create for their own needs. Division of labor is a very beautiful economic theory, but it has passed the margin of decreasing returns. It is only those who are overpaid for their own work who benefit by hiring others to do what they can do themselves.

A great many people in the cities, including booksellers and would-be booksellers, have been deeply interested in my experience on this ranch; and I see no reason for secretiveness about it. My business depends on two essentials—an important stock, and a nationwide list of customers; and neither can be acquired except over a period of years. I think that more of the established booksellers are likely to follow my example. I am not here concerned with the new book trade, but in the field of rare books and trend towards more scholarly cataloguing (largely stimulated by the advent of European booksellers to New York) has been long overdue. The broadening of the scope of rare bookselling is an equally salutary development. Too long have American booksellers—and collectors—confined themselves to the narrow limits of a few fashionable books, the fields of Californiana and other local Americana, and the pursuit of points in modern First Editions.

The scholarly publisher is practically extinct, as is the scholarly seller of new books. The rare bookseller and the print dealer, and all the handicrafts are gradually disappearing before the onrush of a civilization which has forgotten both its origins and its principles. It seems fairly obvious that such trades cannot pay the city rentals justified for the mass merchandising of motor cars, refrigerators, furs and perfumes, but they can survive, for a little longer, in remote locations such as my own.

If the coming major depression succeeds in halting or reversing the purely mechanical present direction of our so-called civilization, there may again be room for small booksellers in the city; and, for the sake

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of a little enlightenment, it is to be hoped that a few will stay there. However, the important point which I wish to make, has nothing to do with business—bookselling or otherwise; it is, simply, that life in the country—if one starts soon enough—is likely to make a better human being. And there are many occupations, besides my own, which can be conducted without an office in the Russ Building. Such a solution deserves consideration by those who are more afraid of city psychosis, radio and the regimentation of big business than of silence, the lack of a telephone and some physical labor.

### CLYDE BROWNE—"MASTER PRINTER"

"COLLECT Clyde Browne imprints? Heavens, no!" said the head of a California library that collects local fine printing. "He never made the grade."

It is true that Clyde Browne, "master printer," as he styled himself, never succeeded in achieving a valid individual style or in breaking away from the Roycroft tradition (as is shown in the wording of the colophon in one of his most carefully executed pieces, "Clyde Browne, Master Printer, has printed this book in his very best manner at his shop in the Abbey of San Encino . . ."); but for what he tried to do and especially for his influence on others, he is worth some attention.

Browne, who was born in 1872, was a dreamer and impractical in a business way, and much too inclined to follow many lines of interest at once, but he succeeded in putting his greatest dream into solid form in the Abbey San Encino, in the Highland Park district of Los Angeles. Brought to California from Ohio when an infant, Browne grew up in

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A NOTE ON SOURCES: This sketch is drawn mostly from examination of Browne imprints and from interviews. Many of Clyde Browne's friends, relatives, and employees are still active in the Los Angeles area; of these I am particularly indebted to Laurence Cook of Occidental College, Scott E. Haselton of Pasadena, Frank Masley of Highland Park, and Robert Nash of Sierra Madre for information. The last-named collects Browne imprints and has gathered much material on him by interview. Both the Huntington and Occidental College libraries collect such imprints, the latter having examples of most of the work Browne did for the College; staff members of both institutions were very helpful. In addition to newspaper obituaries and feature articles, there is a chapter on Browne in an unpublished M.A. thesis, *Fine Printing in Southern California*, by Jane Frampton, Occidental College, 1940, and articles in various printing periodicals, notably *The Abbey San Encino* by Carl F. Blaker, in *The Inland Printer*, July, 1937, pp. 49-50.

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the northern Sacramento Valley. Going to San Francisco as a youth, he served as cabin boy and in other capacities on Pacific Mail and Oceanic line steamships. Leaving the sea, he became a printer and newspaperman, being connected with the *Petaluma Imprint* in 1888 and later with the *Marin County Tocsin* for six years.

While located in Marin County, the young man used to visit the sites of San Rafael and San Francisco Solano missions, and he later said that it was in 1893 that he conceived the idea of building an abbey from which fine printing, good fellowship, and harmony would issue. Browne originally envisioned the hills of Sonoma County as the site for this revival of the best features of monasticism. His work, however, took him elsewhere, and the building that he finally erected rose on the banks of the Arroyo Seco between Pasadena and Los Angeles.

From 1904 to 1909 Browne worked in the pressroom of the Los Angeles *Examiner*. In the latter year he "went out" in labor troubles, and did not return; he set up his own print shop in Highland Park in partnership with Alexander B. Cartwright, and the imprint "Browne and Cartwright" appears from 1910 to about 1913. In 1910 the new firm printed the "Frosh Bible" for Occidental College, which was the beginning of a long and fruitful association; Browne was the semi-official printer to Occidental until his death, and had strong personal links with the college, especially with its literary life. In the course of time he printed many more issues of the *Student's Handbook*, the weekly *Occidental*, the *Occidental Alumnus*, the *Sabretooth* (the campus literary magazine, to which he also contributed), two volumes of *La Encina* (the yearbook), and hundreds of programs, invitations, bulletins, etc.

In 1915 Browne began the construction of his abbey-printshop. Since it was done by hand, with the assistance of two or three friends, and largely with salvaged material, it was a slow job, and the building was not finished until about 1925. The abbey is located at the foot of a small bluff which hides it from the traffic of North Figueroa Street (Pasadena Avenue when the abbey was built); the lot fronts on three streets, which gave Browne three addresses: 6162 Pasadena Avenue, 6232 Marmion Way, and 6211 Arroyo Glen Street. The property contains two connected buildings—the story-and-a-half abbey, of stone and brick, built around a patio, with large basement rooms, half-subterranean; and a sprawling wooden house that rambles up the hill on two or three levels. The latter is made up of apartments and studios

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which Browne used to rent, chiefly to artists of various types.

The abbey was built on the lines of a California mission, from salvaged stone and brick, old railroad ties, tile picked up in the fields near the missions, tile made by Browne himself, and odds and ends from various sources. For decoration the structure was filled with artistic flotsam and jetsam—stones from old English abbeys, scraps of glass from war-torn French cathedrals, bricks from Spanish monasteries, huge old locks and keys, Indian relics, old firearms, manuscript missals, and other “debris from many lands and climes,” as Browne said. Most of the stained glass came from the bar of the Van Nuys Hotel in Los Angeles, dismantled when Prohibition was instituted. In the music room—which became in the course of time an informal wedding chapel—Browne himself built the pipe organ. There have been other homes or shrines built of similar materials by unorthodox persons, but this one is unusual, if not unique, in that it is laid out, not in feet and inches, but in picas.

In the pressroom there is a sort of rose window representing an Indian operating a hand press under the supervision of a friar. A reproduction of this design was used in many of Browne's books as a printer's mark; he also used a monogram in which C and B were worked into the semblance of a butterfly. The latter device appears as the signature on some of his woodcuts, and in wrought iron as the weathervane of the abbey. Having in mind English monasticism, Browne at first called the building “Oldstane Abbey,” but was persuaded to give it a more local flavor by changing the name to Abbey San Encino (“Saint Live Oak”).

In the workrooms of the abbey Browne had an old drum cylinder press, a 10x15 platen press with Kluge automatic feeder, an 8x12 platen press, hand fed, and a wide assortment of type faces and ornaments. Browne was very fond of ornament, and it was not until some of his later work that he broke away from excessive use of it. One ornament which helps identify his work is a set of scenic initials, representing medieval walls and towers, drawn by him. In addition to the Occidental College work mentioned above, Browne did newspapers, yearbooks, and job printing for Pasadena College, the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, and other schools; he also printed the first daily newspaper of the University of Southern California, predecessor of the *Trojan*. Although Browne preferred to hand-set the type on important jobs, he had a linotype, which eventually came to

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be used for such limited editions as the *Tiburcio Vásquez* of 1941.

It is impossible now to find and list the hundreds or thousands of pamphlets, programs, menus, handbills, and so forth turned out at the abbey, but some of those done by Browne "in his very best manner"—many of them his own writings—can be found in the Huntington, Occidental College, and other libraries. In 1917 and 1918 he printed two editions of his own poems, *Cloisters of California*, and in 1921 began issuing pamphlets about the abbey; these consist of three different titles, in many editions. One, *The Abbey Fantasy*, printed in 1929 in 200 numbered copies, is a good example of Browne at his most lush. The title continues: "an Idyl of San Encino's Making, by the Builder, Done in the Escritorium of the Hospice at the Time of Hallowmas under the Benign Sway of All Saints and in the Year of the Cloister the Twenty-First." The text, which is set in Caslon, is in the same florid style, and is appropriately set off, on every page, by an elaborate foliage border, reminiscent of William Morris.

Also in 1929 appeared *How to Live Life*, by Jack Carruthers, in 200 copies, bound in boards. The imprint is "The Fathersonian Press," a pun on the fact that the work was done by Dr. John Carruthers, his son Jack, Clyde Browne, and *his* son Jack. In 1932 Volume V of *First the Blade* was printed at the abbey. There were other books of poems in the ensuing years; in 1940 appeared a pamphlet by Browne, *A Couple of Good Scouts*. This was to celebrate the marriage of Jack Browne, and is quite different typographically from earlier abbey imprints, since it was designed by the younger Browne.

Clyde Browne was seriously ill in 1941, and Jack Browne took over active direction of the press; it was under his aegis that the firm's last major imprint appeared: a reprint of *Tiburcio Vásquez*, a sketch by Ben C. Truman, which was issued in an edition of 100 copies, in boards. Clyde Browne died in the Queen of the Angels Hospital on July 1, 1942, and was buried in Pasadena. He left two sons, Laurence, by his first marriage, and (Clyde) Jack, by his second; soon after his father's death Jack went into the Army, and the press was discontinued, most of the equipment sold, and the abbey rented to others.

In addition to the poems and essays mentioned, Browne used to write for the Occidental *Sabretooth*, and on occasion drew covers for the magazine. He wrote at least one play ("The Plotters," about 1920), and worked intermittently on a long epic poem in blank verse, dealing with monastic life. Browne also kept up his newspaper interest, writing

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a weekly column for the Highland Park *Post-Dispatch*, editing the *Bullet* of the Highland Park Kiwanis Club, and starting various little papers of his own, such as *Clyde Browne's Vagaries* (1931) and *Abbeygrams* (1932); the latter ran to four numbers, but there seems to have been only one issue of the former.

Another periodical which Browne helped publish was the *Journal* of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, which had its headquarters in the Abbey San Encino, since one of the studios was occupied by its secretary, Scott E. Haselton. On the abbey linotype Haselton and Browne composed the magazine and other works published by the Society, including an elaborate three-volume work, but these were printed elsewhere. Haselton, who now owns the Abbey Garden Press in Pasadena, used the imprint "Abbey San Encino Press," which was legally his and not Browne's, though Browne used it occasionally after Haselton moved from the abbey.

More than one of the abbey's tenants was a cactus grower, and others were leather workers, wrought iron workers, wood-block cutters, and writers, such as Lanier Bartlett. Browne once thought of

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developing a sort of "street in Spain" of small handcraft shops, but nothing came of it, and later tenants included such non-artistic persons as a real estate agent, a dressmaker, and someone who raised earthworms for sale. At one time one of the studios was rented by two former Occidental students named Lawrence Clark Powell and Ward Ritchie—in the abbey the former learned to play the organ and the latter practiced his newly-acquired knowledge of typesetting and printing. Many other persons now active in printing in Southern California learned there, such as House Olson and Roscoe Thomas.

As has been mentioned, the music room came to be a wedding chapel, and the "Master of the Abbey" often played for the ceremonies. The basement rooms, or "dungeons," were used for college fraternity initiations; indeed, the abbey appears to have been a gathering place for Occidental students, to several generations of whom Clyde Browne was guide, philosopher, and friend. He was often a guide in specific ways; for example, as leader of a group called "The Abbey Writers." After the abbey was completed the "Master Builder" devoted most of his surplus energy and attention to boating; he kept a 42-foot sloop at San Pedro, was at one time Commodore of the Terminal Island Yacht Club, and was scoutmaster of a troop of Sea Scouts.

In addition to these activities of his own, Browne had fraternal and political connections, and many social groups made the abbey their headquarters. Clyde Browne was a liberal, and an early advocate of women's suffrage. He was chairman of the Democratic Committee for the 54th Assembly District for six years, resigning in 1941 but retaining membership until his death. In August, 1934, he was a candidate for the State Assembly in the primary election. In a campaign biography, Lanier Bartlett says that Browne was a creative dreamer, a business man, "a successful contender in the open marts of trade." As has been shown, he did put one of his dreams into tangible form, but on the whole this description may be taken as campaign oratory, for by all other accounts Browne was impractical. Money received was quickly, and with no regard for budget, devoted to one or another of his many interests, and the press payroll was not very efficiently managed. Jack Browne said in an obituary of his father that it was Mrs. Browne—who died in 1940—who kept the family fed and cared for.

But impractical as he may have been, and not successful in doing really distinguished printing, the "Sage of Highland Park"—another of his many titles—led a rich and full life, and left behind a good record

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of encouraging various young people to learn to print, or to write better, or to sail a boat better, and to seek more from life than purely material rewards.

### WESTERN BOOKS EXHIBITION 1948

*H. Richard Archer, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library*

THE CURRENT EXHIBITION of books printed in the states west of the Rockies during the year 1947, is now on tour of three Pacific Coast states. This is the seventh show sponsored by the Rounce & Coffin Club of Los Angeles and it will travel to a score of libraries before its schedule is completed in April 1949. Lyle Wright, Chairman of the exhibition for the second consecutive year, made the arrangements, and with the help of other members of the R. & C. group, prepared a catalogue of the show. Gordon Holmquist, a printer member of the Club, designed the catalogue which was printed at the Cole-Holmquist Press in Los Angeles.

A jury, composed of Robert O. Schad, of the Huntington Library, Ned Stirling, designer and member of the R. & C. Club, and Carroll T. Harris, of the Roxburghe Club in San Francisco, selected forty-five books which were produced by twenty-one of the contributors. Although some twenty-nine designers and printers are represented in this year's collection, the majority of the books chosen were produced in the San Francisco Bay area. The University of California Press, with the largest plant on the coast, did eleven books, while Anderson & Ritchie of Los Angeles printed eight. Jane, Edwin and Robert Grabhorn had a hand in eight of the books done on various presses, including the Book Club's *13 California Towns*. Two other publications done for the Club were up to the excellent standards of former years: *Donner Miscellany* printed by Lewis and Dorothy Allen, and the *California Adventure* from Taylor & Taylor.

Other outstanding work from the following presses make this year's exhibition representative of the finest work produced in the West: Mills College, Stanford University Press, Merrill Reed Co., The Gillick Press, Jack Stauffacher at the Greenwood Press, Johnck & Seeger, and Lederer, Street & Zeus Co.

Non-California presses are represented by two books from Caxton Printers in Caldwell, Idaho, The Silver Quoin Press of Seattle (a newcomer) and The University of New Mexico Press in Albuquerque.

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As in former years, the Rounce & Coffin Club solicited books from the other western states, but with the same result; very few were submitted. The members of the Club hope that printers in the other western states do not feel that the competition is intended for California designers and craftsmen only, although the records of all shows indicate California dominance. Future exhibitions, it is hoped, will include a larger proportion of books from Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Arizona, and New Mexico. The Western Books competition is strictly a regional affair, and as printing develops in each state of the area, the best work produced belongs in the annual exhibition.

During recent months, members of the R. & C. have received suggestions and given some thought to the possible inclusion of other western states, so that representative work for Texas, Oklahoma, Utah, Colorado and some other states situated west of the Mississippi River might be eligible. After much deliberation, the members decided to continue along the lines set originally, particularly as its resources and membership depend entirely upon the support given the organization in the far west. Events seem to show that other regional shows are being arranged and sponsored in various localities. This tendency is evident with the Philadelphia Book Clinic (in its third annual exhibition) and the New England Book Designers' Show recently held in Boston, and many other exhibitions which received less publicity.

It is difficult to foresee the time when the Rounce & Coffin show will attempt to expand its present program, as only one copy of each book selected is exhibited, and all items not included are returned to the contributors. The schedule will not permit more than a score of exhibitors, due to time limitations, which make it impossible to add other libraries to the schedule. The distances to be covered obviate the need for expanding an already crowded program. Eventually, it may be worth attempting some compromise, but for the time being, the Western Books will satisfy the needs which were recognized when the competition was first inaugurated, and the members hope that the quality of book-work done west of the Rockies will continue to be worthy of the recognition given it and will stimulate other printers, designers and craftsmen to take part in this annual Western competition.

Prior to the exhibition at the San Francisco Public Library from May 18 to June 5 (when this issue of the *News Letter* was in the press), the books were exhibited in three libraries in the Los Angeles area during April and May. In the Bay Area the show will appear from

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June to November at three institutions: California State Library in Sacramento (June 7 to 27), University of California in Berkeley (October 12 to 31), and Stanford University Library (Nov. 3 to 19). The itinerary includes five locations in Oregon and Washington, after which time it will complete its schedule in eight libraries in Southern California. These places and dates are as follows:

Occidental College	November 25–December 12
Pasadena Public Library	December 15–January 2
California Institute of Technology	January 5–January 20
Scripps College (Claremont)	January 24–February 10
University of Redlands	February 14–March 1
Los Angeles City College	March 5–March 20
San Diego Public Library (tentative)	March 24–April 10
Santa Ana Public Library (tentative)	April 14–April 30

Copies of the 32-page printed catalogue are available wherever the books are displayed, or they may be secured by sending ten cents to Secretary-Treasurer, H. Richard Archer, 2205 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles 7, California.

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## *Quarterly News-Letter*

For the first time in the history of the Rounce & Coffin Club, a Western Books show travelled east of the Rockies in 1947. The Retrospective show of the war years (1942-45) was displayed at the Boston Public Library in November, 1947, sponsored by the Bookbuilders' Workshop of that city. On its way west again, The Ampersand Club in Minneapolis and St. Paul arranged to show the Western Books of 1946 to the public in the twin cities. With the interest shown and more enquiries arriving from time to time it may be necessary to organize other retrospective exhibitions made up of books selected from all previous shows which can be sent to other cities in the east and mid-west where the work of western printers can be seen and appreciated.

### GOLD RUSH DOCUMENTS

THE CLUB's twelfth annual keepsake series, *Letters of the Gold Discovery*, was auspiciously launched with the mailing in February of the first two of twelve folders to be sent members during 1948. Part One, designed and printed by Carroll T. Harris at his Aucune Press, reproduced a previously unpublished letter from John A. Sutter to George McKinstry, Jr., written from New Helvetia on January 15, 1848, only nine days before the gold discovery, with an accompanying comment by Miss Caroline Wenzel of the California State Library. Part Two, the February folder, contained facsimile reproductions of two important Gold Rush documents: a copy, in Sutter's handwriting, of a lease negotiated by Sutter and Marshall with the Yalesumney Indians giving the former exclusive rights to mine the new gold fields, together with Sutter's letter transmitting the document to Governor Mason and requesting his approval of its provisions. The comment was written by Charles Olson and the printing was done by Lewis and Dorothy Allen at their L-D Allen Press.

Parts Three and Four followed in May, the first presenting another Sutter letter, this one dated a month after gold was first found at the Coloma mill and addressed to William A. Leidesdorff, prominent San Franciscan of the period. George P. Hammond (general editor of the series) contributed the foreword, and the folder was produced by Miss Rosalind A. Keep at her Eucalyptus Press. The April folder, bearing an introductory note by George L. Harding, and designed and printed at the Greenwood Press, reproduces a letter from Edward C. Kemble, editor of the *California Star*, San Francisco's first newspaper, to the

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historian, John S. Hittell, in which Kemble comments most interestingly on his first visit to the gold fields in April, 1848.

That *Letters of the Gold Discovery* promises to become one of the most interesting and highly prized of the Club's keepsake series is evident from the enthusiasm with which members have commented on the parts so far issued. In particular, Californiana collectors have praised the interest and historical importance of the letters selected for reproduction, and the authoritative and informative texts that accompany them. On the other hand, printing enthusiasts comment on the skill with which the various private presses have designed and printed the folders and on the extraordinarily effective job the Stanford University Press has done with the facsimile letters.

Because frequent requests have been received from members wishing additional sets for gifts to friends, it is necessary to repeat that the limited number printed makes it impossible to supply duplicates. However, a small number of sets have been set aside for additions to the membership roll during the balance of the year and these will be forwarded, as long as the supply lasts, to them upon their election.

### *The Wells Fargo History Room*

located in the Bank's building at 30 Montgomery Street, contains relics of pony-express and covered-wagon days; an original Hangtown stagecoach; early western franks and postmarks, firearms, pictures, and documents. 7 Open to visitors 10 to 3 daily, 10 to 12 Saturdays.

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## *Quarterly News-Letter*

### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

The following have been elected to membership since the Spring issue of the News-Letter:

MEMBER		SPONSOR
R. G. Burmister	San Francisco	James W. Elliott
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Miss Edna Keyes	Walnut Creek	Dale Hollingsworth
Mrs. Marguerite W. Knapp	Los Angeles	Phil Townsend Hanna
William M. Maxfield	San Francisco	Lee L. Stoppel
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Mrs. O. C. Struthers	Altadena	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
University of Chicago Library	Chicago, Illinois	Mrs. Elizabeth Downs
Reuben L. Underhill	Berkeley	Oscar Lewis
Miss Katherine M. Zelinsky	San Francisco	Harry W. Abrahams

The membership roll has grown steadily during recent months and when the few vacancies now remaining are filled a waiting list will be established. Therefore, those wishing to propose new members are urged to forward the enclosed application card promptly, thereby avoiding the likelihood of a delay before the applicant's election.

### MISCELLANY

WE NOTE WITH INTEREST the announcement of a new organization, The National Society of Autograph Collectors. The aims of the NSAC are: "To encourage the meeting of autograph collectors and to stimulate and aid them in their various collecting specialties; to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge among collectors and scholars."

The organization is to be incorporated, not for profit, in Illinois and the dues range from \$5.00 for annual members, \$25.00 for contributing members and \$100.00 for sustaining members. There will be a quarterly publication for members under the editorial direction of Oliver R. Barrett, Leon Godchaux, William Herzog and Ralph Newman. For more complete information, address all inquiries to Dr. Joseph E. Fields, 108 Scott Street, Joliet, Illinois.

## *The Book Club of California*

We have received a delightful little booklet—a group of “Tributes” on Aurelia Henry Reinhardt entitled *In Memoriam* and produced by the Eucalyptus Press of Mills College. It is very professionally done, in quite good taste and expertly printed. All in all, a fitting tribute to a great lady.

In a very dramatic last-minute deal, Deepdene, Frederic Goudy’s home at Marlboro, New York, was purchased as-is to be preserved as a printer’s shrine by a man diametrically opposed (in business) to type and type-setting. Mr. Ralph C. Coxhead, Chairman of the Board of the Ralph C. Coxhead Corporation, New York City, manufacturer of Varitypers (a typewriter used in place of type setting and currently challenging machine and hand composition in the strike-bound Chicago newspapers) purchased the white frame, seventeen-room farm house and twenty acres for \$18,000—outbidding would-be boarding-house buyers. The purchase climaxed a long and futile attempt on the part of Goudy’s son and wife to find someone who would preserve the estate as a shrine for printers and typographers.

This is indeed an indictment of the fraternity which prides itself on “the art preservative of all other arts.”

Bruce Rogers, world-renowned book designer, received the gold medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The medal is given from time to time for “special distinction in art, literature or music, and for the entire work of the recipient.” This is the first time it has been given to a book designer or typographer.

Book Club members, especially those familiar with and actively collecting John Henry Nash imprints, will be pleased to learn that Will Ransom is bringing to a conclusion his preliminary check list of the late Bay Area printer. Already the typed data sheets and manuscript exceeds any compiled on Nash, and with the aid of collectors and librarians in California, Ransom hopes to have the most complete and authoritative check list of the man’s work ready for the printer sometime this summer. The material will appear as part of the project which has been under way for many months, the first numbers of which have already been published by Duschnes-Crawford of New York. Members who know of unusual or unique specimens done by “the Aldus of San Francisco” will be doing Ransom and other col-

## Quarterly News-Letter

lectors a favor by reporting these to the compiler whose address is Faculty Exchange, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An unsigned article *Book-Collecting in the United States* appeared in the April 3, 1948, issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*. In a short summary the author makes some interesting comments about conditions and problems in the English book trade and compares prices of auction sales there with those in the United States. Evidently written by an Englishman familiar with both markets, the statements are of considerable interest to collectors of specialized materials in this country.

... An extraordinary situation—that many English literary first editions are cheaper in New York than in London—if only it were possible for London dealers, by buying in New York, to reverse, as they would like to do, the steady current of the past seventy-five years. ... But whereas in England, the demand for this type of book has remained fairly lively, in America it has for some years been dropping even more sharply than the curve of supply has been rising. And it is mortifying to English collectors and dealers that they cannot take advantage of the relatively favourable prices in New York and at the same time help to redress the disparity between the two markets which has only reached its present width because of the suspension of normal trading.

Carl Purington Rollins, Printer to Yale University, was visiting the West Coast during May and June. During his stay in Southern California he was a guest at the Zamorano Club and met with the members and guests of the Rounce & Coffin Club at a dinner in his honor in Pasadena on May 11. On May 17, he was the guest of honor at a meeting of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco where he discoursed amusingly on his experiences in "Hunting the Agathynia."

C.P.R., a familiar name to printers and collectors of fine printing, is no stranger to the west, as he delivered a series of lectures on book designing and printing eleven years ago at the University of California in Berkeley.

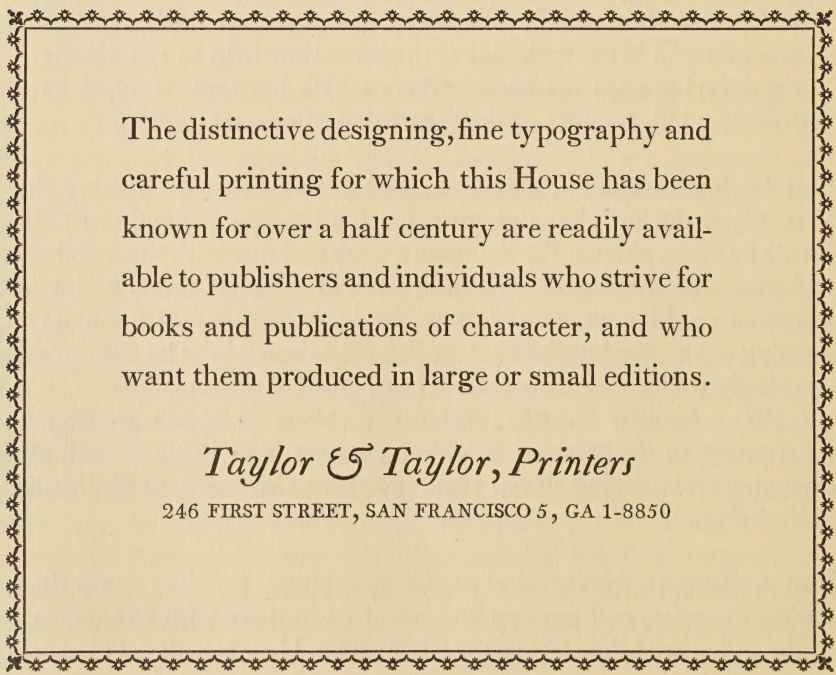
Paul A. Bennett, master mind of the Typophiles, for the second time within the year, will journey to California to meet with Craftsmen's Clubs and other printers' groups late in June. He is scheduled to speak

## *The Book Club of California*

in Riverside and Los Angeles and will endeavor to see some of the non-typographic displays which he missed on his first trip last October. What are Californians to think, when the "Kid from Brooklyn" comes west within the period of a few months—perhaps orange juice flows in the veins of the Dodger from Mergenthaler!

Through the generosity of fellow member Carroll T. Harris, members wishing a copy of his handsome portfolio of reprinted ad proofs titled *Gutenberg to Grabhorn* may have one by writing Mr. Harris at Mackenzie & Harris, 659 Folsom Street, San Francisco. This is a Grabhorn item of six leaves, printed in two colors with wood engraved illustrations by Mallette Dean. Because of an already heavy demand, Mr. Harris can supply these only as long as they last.

For one month beginning May 17, the Society of Graphic Arts of San Francisco is sponsoring an exhibition of contemporary Argentine Books at the San Francisco Public Library. This is the second exhibition held by the Society and the first of its kind in the United States.



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## Quarterly News-Letter

This noteworthy show (a collector's "must") has been made possible through the coöperation of Dr. Guillermo Kraft of Buenos Aires, one of the Argentine's oldest and finest publisher-printers and Mr. Lewis B. Reynolds of San Francisco, authority and collector of Argentine printing.

The Greenwood Press of San Francisco announces a "timely statement against war" titled *And Who Wants Peace?* by the noted Eric Gill, sculptor, wood engraver, book and type designer, writer and lecturer. It is to be set in Gill's own Perpetua type and printed on English handmade paper. It is an edition limited to 120 copies, 12 pages, 15 x 10 and very modestly priced. In paper covered boards, \$3.75 or a handwoven fabric binding, \$4.75. Address all orders to the Greenwood Press, 509 Sansome Street, San Francisco.

Dawson's Book Shop, 627 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 14, has just issued catalogue 224, *Gutenberg to Grabhorn*. This is by far the finest catalogue (design wise) that Dawson has produced since the now famous Catalogue LXXX which was designed and printed by the Grabhorns. Grant Dahlstrom of the Castle Press, Pasadena, is responsible for the design and printing—Muir Dawson for the preparation. There are listed over 290 tempting items—over one-half of them from The Grabhorn Press. We were dismayed, however, in noting number 175 listed as a Grabhorn item. *Westwind* was printed by Johnck & Seeger and so indicated on the verso of the title page.

As we go to press, Dawson's catalogue No. 225 "One Hundred & One Rare Books" was received. This is another exhibition of fine designing and printing—a "keepsake" in the best sense of the word. Saul and Lillian Marks of The Plantin Press, Los Angeles, are responsible.

And speaking of Dawson's Book Shop, we have just received an announcement soliciting subscriptions for the Ernest Dawson Memorial Fund on the Los Angeles Campus of the University of California. Under the leadership of Dr. Lawrence Clark Powell, Librarian, the University sponsors have joined with friends of the surrounding communities to create this fund, "dedicated to the continuance of his efforts to bring to this area significant books about books, bibliographies, books on printing, on bookselling, and on their reading and enjoyment." Books acquired from this fund will be inscribed as memorials to Dawson. Gifts of books (which will be specially designated)

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as well as cash contributions are being accepted. All checks should be made payable to the Regents of the University of California and may be addressed to the Ernest Dawson Memorial Fund, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles 24.

The Harvard College Library and the Newberry Library jointly announce a series of publications to be entitled *Studies in the History of Calligraphy*. This is a noble continuation of the (unplanned) series that was started by the Grolier Club of New York City beginning with Albrecht Durer (1525), published in 1917; the Geoffroy Tory (1529), published in 1927, and the Luca Pacioli (1509), published in 1933. The first of this new planned series is *Luminario—the Construction of Roman Capitals*, by Giovam Baptista Verini, originally published in 1527 at Toscolano. Of this edition (which has already been published) 400 copies are for sale in America, of which forty have been printed on fine India paper and especially bound and boxed in a cloth fleeced-lined case—\$36.00, and 360 cloth-bound at \$12.00. The price of the two issues represents only the cost to the sponsoring institutions. The book has been printed under the direction of Stanley Morison, in London, at the office of The Times.

We should like to extend congratulations and the wish for a long and happy life to the new private press of William Everson (2445 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley), which he calls The Equinox Press. In his recent broadside announcement, Mr. Everson, a young serious poet of note, plans to issue limited hand-set quarto editions of his poems for those who will subscribe to these printings and help him to bring forth his own creative writings. The broadside promises much for the collector of fine printing. It is an example of meticulous planning and inspired writing, printed on fine paper, in two colors with a powerful block-print by Mary Fabilli. We look forward to review the first of his work in these pages.

*Correction:* In listing the gift-insert contributors in our last issue of the *Quarterly*, we inadvertently omitted crediting Club member Philip C. Case as the printer of the Grabhorn item that was designed and set in type at the Black Vine Press.